



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

February 22, 2023

SB 598

Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program Fund - Appropriation

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 598 would increase – from \$3.0 million to \$40.0 million – the amount of the appropriation that the Governor must include in the annual budget bill for the Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program Fund.

The Catholic Church has a strong interest in public safety and keeping communities safe. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states in response to rising violence that “[w]e have an obligation to respond. Violence – in our homes, our schools and streets, our nation and world – is destroying the lives, dignity and hopes of millions of our sisters and brothers.” To that point, the Church supports legislation that strengthens public safety within our local communities.

In practice, the Conference supports legislation that works to support and enhance public safety within our communities. When community members are not in fear of their lives, they can live up to their God-given potential and enrich the world around them. Every person has a right to life, and the Conference will continue to work to combat violence and promote a culture of peace.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a **favorable** report for Senate Bill 598.